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## THE PARENTS' ASSOCIATION.

### REPORT OF THE OCTOBER MEETING.

MRS. FRANK HUGH MONTGOMERY,

SECRETARY.

THE Parents' Association of the School of Education met at the school building on Thursday evening, October 20. The meeting was called to order by Dean Owen, who introduced the new president, Mr. Charles A. Heath.

Mr. Heath stated that the Parents' Association had done a good work in the past and hoped to do a larger in the future, and affirmed that parents and teachers were alike necessary to its well-being. He said that the work which had been done would have been impossible without the co-operation of the teachers. He emphasized the fact that discussion was open to all present. With pleasant wit, and apt stories of illustration of the differences between the old days and those of the new education, he made each feel at home and as if he had a part to play in making the association of value.

The secretary then gave a list of the chairmen of committees as follows:

Mrs. William Kent, chairman of the Finance Committee.

Mrs. Wilbur S. Jackman, chairman of the Home Committee.

Mrs. John O'Connor, chairman of the Education Committee.

Mrs. Warren McArthur, chairman of the Social Committee.

The secretary also outlined the work proposed for the year by the Program Committee. The plan was to have an evening devoted to each of the following subjects: "The Practical Side of the Child's Work;" "The Social Life;" "The Curriculum of the Elementary School;" "The Curriculum of the High School;" "The Physical Well-Being of the Child;" "Athletics and Play;" "The Child at Home;" and "Methods of Teaching;" with an evening devoted to the reports of the various committees and a discussion of the plans for the ensuing year.

It was voted, after a speech by the treasurer, Mr. A. V. Booth,

that the dues be \$2 a year, which would pay for the notices of meetings, circulars, refreshments, etc.

The topic of the evening, "The Place of Industrial Work in the Home and the School," was introduced by Miss Clara Mitchell, who spoke chiefly of that side of the work in the Elementary School. She said that there industrial work consists in spinning, weaving, dyeing, in sewing and cutting of garments. In the lowest grades the work is confined to the use of primitive materials, such as the gathering and preparing of flax and grasses. But the end is the control of their own powers on the part of the children, rather than the gathering of materials. The children prepare their own flax or wool, spin it, and make their own spindles and dyes. The object is to have them gain in power, and in knowledge of materials and processes, and to become as accomplished as possible in color, design—in whatever is necessary to the education of taste. The children must know how to make, but they must also gain a knowledge of the history of fabrics, and some knowledge of the scientific facts underlying the processes. They must know what they are about. They like to feel that they are true to fundamental conditions. The end will be a socialized whole. The habit of making something of which they themselves can be the judges increases their power of judgment. Such work also affords scope for originality and initiative. In addition, the work is so related to other subjects that through the work of their hands they come into the culture which belongs to them. Miss Mitchell concluded by giving a concrete example of the work of seven-year-old children, their second year in school. They studied sheep and their fleeces, invented spindles, wove, designed, and were told the great shepherd stories, such as those of the Hebrews. She read the story of Abraham and the visit of the angels as written by a six-year-old child who in the process of his industrial work had learned to read and write.

The next speaker was Mrs. Norton. She said that in her talk she should bear in mind two questions that were frequently asked her: "Why do you have boys learn to cook?" and, "Why do you have little children learn to cook?" She said that cooking

was valuable as (1) manual training, and especially in developing delicacy of manipulation; (2) as applied science, the interest being very direct; (3) in social development. In this last respect, cooking had a higher social value than almost any other form of industrial work. It developed a sense of personal responsibility, of the dignity of labor, a control of environment, and a power of initiative, and gave a training in the economics of the consumption of time, material, and money. It was a good effect that work, often considered menial, should have a place in the high-school curriculum. The student gained a new interest in and appreciation of the home. With the younger children in especial there was an added interest in home life; and there was surely need for that in these days, and for boys quite as much as for girls. Little children came with great spontaneity to this work, and as it stood in such close relation to the other work in the school, the effects were very clearly marked. Mrs. Norton ended with a plea for co-operation by the home in the work of the high school as an essential part of the curriculum.

Mrs. William Hill then spoke on "Industrial Work in the Home." Mrs. Hill said that the assumption had been that our children were a product of evolution, being of finer clay than their parents, and that for them all physical hardship should be removed. But with the new education ideas had changed. Interest in colonial life and handicrafts had arisen and was played over in the schools. Valuable as this was, there was an omission of two important periods, for originally handicraft was, first, home education and, second, productive labor. At present the result was a change of basis of loyalty from the home to the school. The child did all of the interesting things at school, and at home expected to be entertained and to entertain. Mrs. Hill thought that perhaps the transfer from a smaller to a larger social unit was an advantage. The thing was to find something to take the place of the old industries in the home. In order to find out what children did at home, she had gone over the blanks filled out the preceding year by parents of the Elementary School children. Out of 228 pupils 195 had answered the question as to whether any work outside of the school was done by the children. Ninety-

seven answered in the affirmative. Music had the largest representation. The other things enumerated were dancing, home study, a language, play, housekeeping, gymnastics, manual training, and Sunday-school lessons. The home used to represent productive labor. We must invent something new. The ideal of education is productive labor. It must be adapted to our present needs. Booker T. Washington had shown his students how to react upon their environment. It remained for us to accomplish the same with our more complex conditions. The aspect of home industry was democratizing. The emancipation of the woman from old-time household drudgery had come, as had that of the child, from "being seen and not heard." These changes have not met with universal approval. But what had met with universal disapproval had been the emancipation of the servants. If our home was considered a place in which to develop industries, instead of a place in which to display our prosperity, we might attain greater results. We need the co-operation of the family in eliminating the servant problem. Through our new knowledge of the science of food-values great strides may be made. Such co-operation had many practical aspects, and there were great possibilities in making use of the help of our children, if we could have patience with the child's slowness and his tendency to let his interest be sidetracked.

Mrs. Errant expressed herself as increasingly in sympathy with each speaker, and told in detail of ways in which she had tried household industries in the development of her own family. She had found training in the care of their own rooms and clothing, and especially in cooking, to result in the training of eye, ear, and touch, and to engender responsibility and adaptability. She had made great use of the summer vacations and had seized the time when the children had shown the strongest interest. But she had found that the great problem was that they had not the time to devote to the home which they should have.

Mr. Jackman next spoke as parent and teacher. He considered the keynote of the Parents' Association to be to bring together the influence of the home and the school in the training of children. He told of the way in which the children were help-

ing in the beautifying of the grounds by planting bulbs. He thought the work must result in something really worth while. He said if the parents could send in a list of what was needed in the home in the way of shelves, etc., the school would be glad to make them. We must not always be looking back to primitive conditions, but find the needs of our own. He urged that the association had an opportunity to take hold of the larger possibilities of the school. He said the school needed an assembly hall and a gymnasium, and that a farm could be used with great profit in teaching the children some of the conditions of rural life. He pleaded for the interest of the parents in these matters, and ended with a description of the plans of the magazine, the *ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER*.

Mr. Owen expressed his great regret that Mr. Belfield could not be present and present his own field of manual training, in which he had labored so long and so successfully. He said that the equipment of the manual-training building was second to none in the country. He thought that the fundamental thing in industrial training was not technical skill, not to get immediate returns, but, broadly speaking, moral and spiritual results. The high-school work had a great reinforcement when this work was brought into the curriculum, and he wanted to do exactly the same thing for the girls as for the boys.

The meeting adjourned for refreshment and for social intercourse in the adjoining room.